

## ***FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** November 8, 2012

**Agenda Item:** Montana State Parks Biennial Fee Rule

**Division:** Parks      **Action Needed:** Approval of Tentative Rule

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 30 minutes

**Background** The Montana State Parks Biennial Fee Rule establishes fees and associated rules for the state park system in accordance with 23-1-105 MCA. The Rule identifies fees for entrance to state parks (nonresidents), camping, facility rental, guided tours (e.g. Lewis and Clark Caverns), and Special Uses at state parks. The commission last increased resident camping fees in 2002 and nonresident camping fees in 2010 and authorized camping reservation fees in 2010. The Biennial Fee Rule also provides direction to staff for managing visitor use, e.g. occupancy limits at campsites and permit requirements for group use and special events.

**Public Involvement Process & Results** The Parks Division will conduct a 30-day comment period (minimum) and invite the public to provide input on the proposed fee rule.

**Alternatives and Analysis** The Parks Division has prepared a draft fee rule for consideration by the Commission, including the following highlights:

- There are no proposed fee increases.
- Peak season and reservation program season are extended to include the third Friday of May through the third Sunday of September, when potable water and a higher level of staffing and service are provided.
- There is a proposed \$3.00 per night reduction in off season resident camping fees, as a means of acknowledging a lower level of staffing, service and amenities, particularly potable water during the off season (third Monday of September through the third Thursday of May)
- Backcountry camping is redefined with a reduced fee (from \$7 per camping unit to \$4 per camping unit).
- Check-in and check-out times for campsites, cabins, yurts and tepees have been specified more clearly.
- Campsite capacity definitions are established for single, double, quad, and group campsites.
- Fees for large-group campsites are more clearly specified based on maximum pre-determined campsite capacity (camping units and/or 8 person increments).
- Food storage rules are established with standards for allowable food storage techniques. These rules may be implemented only at parks with a history of or high probability of human/bear conflicts.
- Livestock use rules are established with standards for certified weed seed free feed.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale** The department recommends that the Commission approve the tentative rule as proposed and seek public comment.

**Proposed Motion** "I move that the Commission approve the tentative parks biennial fee rule pending public comment."